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# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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## METHODS OF STUDYING CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN READING

VERA FEDIAEVSKY

*The Institute of Out-School Work, Moscow, Russia*

IN THE United States of America great researches are being made at present of children's interest in reading at different ages. We Russians know it from such interesting books as the "Winnetka Graded Book List" by Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel, and the "Children's Reading: A Guide for Parents and Teachers", by Lewis M. Terman and Margaret Lima, and from the articles of Mr. Carleton Washburne in *The Elementary English Review*, in the *Journal of Education Research* and in *School and Society*, etc.

We Russians have not had any investigations made on this subject on such a large scale, but the problem of children's literary preferences at different ages is of great interest to us. Perhaps our work, not extensive, but carried on with great love, might be of some interest to American pedagogues and librarians. Therefore I intend outlining some methods of this work in one of our experimental institutes.

The Department of Children's Reading in the Institute of Out-School work, Moscow, has as one of its chief aims the experimental study of children's perceptions and interest at different ages. The following are some of the methods of studying the interest of children in the Department of Children's Reading.

*I. The Method of the Literal Writing Down of Requests.* Information concerning the reader is inscribed on the card—age, sex, nationality and social position. Every time a child asks for a book, the manner of his asking and that which he asks for are set down word for word. The data, obtained thus, are quite objective, and serve to characterize the reader in question, as well as this or the other group of readers. The demands are sometimes made under school influences or independently.

The following demands show the influence of the school.

"Books on trades-unions because a task of drawing a diagram of trades-unions has been set by the school".

"Books on the imperialist war and the revolution of February".

"Books on czarism in 1905 and 1917 as a composition to be written".

Of course, it is the free request which interests us most, and not that in conjunction with school tasks, for the first characterizes that in which the child takes an interest, and the second—that which is required by the school. This free request is generally characteristic of the children's tastes.

"Haven't you any funny ones, like Max and Moritz?"

"Give me the most interesting one, that one can have a good cry over."

"Give me a book about something terrible."

"Something about dogs."

Environment and cinemas in particular exert a great influence on the character of the requests:

"Give me Robin Hood",

"Give me the Iron-Clad Potemkin",

"Have you the Thief of Bagdad"?

Here are several requests characteristic of boys:

"You've got a book about building little aeroplanes" (age 12 years),

"About fights and banditti" (age 12 years),

"About the very strongest valiant men" (age 11 years),

"Something about Indians" (age 13 years),

"A book with the tramway in it" (age 5 years),

"A book with a drum in it" (5 years old),

"Give me a book about the man who invented electricity" (9 years old),

"Adventures at sea for me" (14 years of age),

"Have you any literature about radium! Every one in our lodging takes an interest in it" (age 9),

"Something about fires and fire engines" (9 years of age).

Here are some examples of little girls' requests:

"A piteous one" (age 9),

"About dollies",

"From the life of a poor little girl" (age 12),

"Give me verses about the first of May" (age 13),

"An album",

"About twins like the little Dutch" (age 9).

We see that the circle of interest of boys is wider and more varied than that of girls. School exerts a levelling influence on this difference in the tastes of boy and girl.

We consider that in a psychological sense, it is more interesting to note the character of the requests for books than the titles of the books received, as this last may depend on the existence of this or the other book in library, whereas the first comes from the child.

## II. *Taking Notes of the Child's Opinion on the Book it Has Read.*

The opinion may be given either independently, or in answer to a question, and the first interests us more, as being more spontaneous. This often takes the shape of a recommendation to another child to read a book.

"Take Robinson Crusoe", says a boy of ten to a comrade, "it's interesting to read how the ship sank, and Robinson alone was saved".

Opinions are given on some particular book, on a group of books, or on a definite theme. The following are the questions we prefer putting to children:

"What was most interesting?"

"What was funniest?"

"What was most terrible?"

"What pictures must we draw for this story?"

To this children give a succinct answer, instead of a narration, or a vague formal answer.

These are primitive materials, but they are objective and taken from life, and the child's manner of expressing its impression is rendered word for word.

It stands to reason that talks on such questions are possible only where an atmosphere of freedom, unrestraint and implicit trust prevails. The talk must take place in customary surroundings.

If the talk takes place after a story has been related, pains are taken to verify the impressions of the observer during the story-hour.



The children's remarks on what they have read are written down openly, and the reason for doing so is explained to them in a manner they can easily understand i.e.—we want to know what you like, so as to know what you are to read, and what books are to be bought for schools and libraries. Such unconstrained children's remarks are of more value from our point of view than the reviews children write of books they have read. These reviews usually serve only to show the children's skill in expressing their thoughts, and are often both formal and lacking in originality.

### *III. Remarks Set Down on the Reader's Card.*

Each reader has a card, on which is noted, as well as on the first, information concerning the reader. Every time a book is given out, besides its title, the date, and when it has been delivered, the following is also noted by means of a conventional letter:

1. What influenced the choice of the book: was it an independent request, or the influence of the school, a comrade's recommendation, that of the Librarian, or the influence of a poster.

2. The manner of utilizing the book.

Notes are taken of what the child did with the book; did he read it, did he read it to the end, did he look through it or look at the pictures, did he copy them or copy anything out of the book, did he return it because he had read it before, did he listen to its being read aloud.

3. The assessment of the book is also noted down in brief conventional signs: liked; not liked; so—so; a difficult book.

Such notes, on the one hand, render clear the fitness of the book for children's minds and its interest for children, and on the other hand, they show the evolution of each individual reader.

### *IV. Watching the Childish Audience When it is Being Read Aloud to, or Listening to the Telling of a story.*

I have written an article on this last form of observation ("‘Here and Now’ Stories in Russia. An Experiment". The Elementary School Journal. Vol. XXVI. No. 4, December 1925). Therefore I only borrow from it the main features of this kind of study.

"The experiments conducted by the section on children's reading have been carried on in the following way. Before a story is begun, the name of each of the children who are to listen to it is recorded together with the sex and the age. The audiences vary, but usually they consist in part of a nucleus of constant listeners, so that many are already known to the workers of the institute. They are mostly of proletarian origin. The main groups are three in number: pre-school children (four to seven years of age), children of the primary grades (eight to ten years of age), and children from eleven to fourteen years of age. Sometimes a special audience is formed—for example, when a neighboring nursery school is invited or when the audience is purposely composed entirely of girls or of children of a certain age.

"While the story-teller is telling the story, a responsible assistant makes detailed notes of the children's reactions to it; marks the heightening or abating of their attention; records their comments, their exclamations, their smiles, and their laughter, and the general frame of mind of the audience. In order to make these records easily and effectively, we have adopted conventional signs for the evaluation of the attention of the audience, from a sign indicating active inattention on the one hand to a sign indicating complete absorption on the other.

"Several other adults are usually present. When the story is finished, both the story and the record are discussed; thus the observations of the assistant are completed and verified by the story-teller and by the other adults present. Sometimes the story is accompanied by the children's dramatization of it, by their retelling of it, or by some other method of bringing out the impressions that they have received. Sometimes pictures relating to the story are hung up for the children to see; this gives them an opportunity to express their suppositions and appreciations. These reflections and all that the story gives rise to are recorded. Thus abundant materials are gathered for the study of children's literature interests."

It is very interesting to note that the results of our researches made in totally

## A REPLY TO THE CRITICS OF THE WINNETKA GRADED BOOK LIST

CARLETON WASHBURN AND MABEL VOGEL

*Winnetka, Illinois*

IN THE September number of THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW the Winnetka Graded Book List was the subject of a good deal of discussion. The severe criticism received at the hands of a group of children's librarians calls for some explanation of the making and use of the lists, and a direct reply to their principal objections.

The Winnetka Graded Book List is the outcome of an attempt to find out what books are being read and enjoyed by children of various ages and degrees of reading ability.

Thirty-six thousand seven hundred and fifty children scattered through thirty-four cities in various parts of the United States filled out ballots on every book which they read during the larger part of a year. On each child's ballot were recorded his silent reading score and his age and sex. The child checked one of the following statements about each book he read:

One of the best books I ever read

A good book, I like it

Not so very interesting

I don't like it.

Over 100,000 of these ballots were received by the Winnetka research office. On the basis of these data, the graded list was prepared. The list contains 700 books on which 25 or more children's judgments were received and which are probably suitable for children. We had reports on 8,500 other books, none of which were read by a large enough number of children to justify us in grading them. The list is graded not according to the actual school grade of the children but according to the grade to which their reading ability corresponds. It

also contains an age index in which the books are arranged according to the age of the children who have read and enjoyed them.

Books that were definitely trashy or unsuitable for children, even though widely read, have not been included in this list. Thirteen expert librarians went over the list of books rating them as to literary merit. All books which were considered as having unusual literary merit by three-fourths or more of the experts, were starred. All those considered definitely trashy or unsuitable by three-fourths or more of the experts were excluded from the published list, but are available in mimeographed form.\*

Some of the books listed have several editions. In case we had many ballots on several editions but not enough on any one edition to give a reliable grading, all ballots were combined. This was done only in cases where the different editions were of equal difficulty. Upon the suggestion of officials of the American Library Association two editions were listed in such cases—one an expensive one and the other a cheaper one.

The Winnetka Graded Book List, a bound volume of nearly 300 pages, resulted. It was published by the American Library Association, and it is this list which was so vigorously attacked by the group of librarians writing for this Review last fall.

The attacks of our critics can be largely summed up under three general heads—viz.:

\* This list of books will be published in the February REVIEW.

The selection of books is poor.

The grading is unreliable and inaccurate.

The arrangement within grades, according to an index of popularity, is indefensible.

Let us answer each in turn.

1. *The selection of the books is poor.* Our critics in summing up their remarks say, "The general conclusions of the Winnetka investigators seem to be that what the child with a very limited range of books available appears to want, is what children generally should have."

There are two things wrong with this assumption on the part of our critics: We have never claimed that the child's interest should be the sole criterion for selecting books—but surely it is one important criterion; and the statement that the children reporting to us had a very limited range of books available happens to be contradicted by the facts of the case.

In determining the *grade* in which a book belongs—the age and degree of reading ability most children must reach in order to enjoy reading it—the interest of the children proves to be a sound and valid criterion. The scientific justification for this statement is set forth at some length in the introduction to the Book List. That there may be many desirable books not included in the Book List is highly probable and is frankly stated in the preface: "It makes no claim to being a completely rounded out buying list." (p. 10). There are not, however, any books in the list which are considered trashy by a large proportion (three-fourths or more) of the expert children's librarians who were kind enough to rate the books for literary quality. And those which these librarians considered first rate literature are starred. We wonder, therefore, why certain librarians say that if the Book List "were really used, the children would be the sufferers."

As to the "very limited range of books available," have our critics examined the

school libraries of the Beaver County Day School, the Community School, the Francis Parker School, the Lincoln School at Providence? Have they found the libraries of the elementary schools of the University of Iowa, the Michigan State Normal College, the Detroit Teachers College, and the Eastern Illinois State Teachers College to contain a "very limited range of books"? Do they imply that the public schools and public libraries of Ann Arbor, Gary, Milwaukee, Grand Rapids, and Baltimore, contain only unimportant and undesirable books? Even small places like Wilmette and Winnetka have thousands of titles available for children and have for years encouraged the reading of good literature. Our reports, it must be remembered, covered altogether over 9,000 different books—not such a limited range.

2. *The grading of the Book List is unreliable and inaccurate.* To prove this, our critics try to show (a) that children's rating is unreliable—"they (the children) would scarcely feel free to report adversely;" (b) books are graded on too small a number of reports; (c) the grading is contrary to the experience of librarians; (d) the grading is self-contradictory in the case of two books.

These points are almost all handled in the introduction to the Book List. Tables and graphs are shown which prove that the children's ratings are consistent and reliable; that children do not hesitate to condemn uninteresting books; that careful analysis of the vocabulary and structure of the books bears out the grading; and that the grading by every statistical check proves both reliable and valid.

The Book List was given by the group of critical librarians to two "scientific specialists" who refused to let their names appear on their report. The anonymous specialists make a point of the fact that for some books data are given when the number of boys or the number of girls, separately, is too small for reliability. As



a matter of fact classification of such books is on the basis of the average reading ability of boys and girls *combined*, making the number of cases large enough for reliable classification. While data are sometimes given for the sexes separately, even when the number of boys or of girls is less than 25, the reader is definitely warned in such cases that such data "are unreliable for the sexes separately." (p. 22).

To quote our critics: "The reading grading of the books is also contrary to our experience. *Puck of Pook's Hill* which could scarcely be enjoyed by children below the sixth school grade because of its difficult subject matter and form is placed in the fifth reading grade along with *Charlie and his Kitten Topsy*, *Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse*, and *Racketty Packetty House*. *Little House in the Woods* (a simple second and third grade book) gets a reading grade of 5.4 while *Buccaneers and Pirates of our Coast* by Stockton (a seventh and eighth grade book) gets a reading grade of 5.9 and appears in the same reading grade."

As to the grading being contrary to the experience of librarians, this involves the naïve assumption that if the facts don't agree with the personal opinion of the critics, the facts must be at fault. If these critics have always assumed that *Little House in the Woods* is a "simple second or third grade book," and *Buccaneers and Pirates of our Coast* is a "seventh and eighth grade book," the data in the Book List should prove suggestive to them. For of the 92 girls in 10 cities who reported on *Little House in the Woods*, the middle half were all of either fifth or sixth grade reading ability and from ten to eleven years old, while of the 25 boys in 7 cities who reported on *Buccaneers and Pirates*, the middle half were also of fifth and sixth grade reading ability, although they were, on the average, a year older (11 and 12). Both books were liked by seven-eighths of the children who read them.

In trying to prove that *Puck of Pook's*

*Hill* was misclassified our critics omitted some important data. The middle half of the children reading *Puck* ranged from grades 5 to 8, and their ages were 11 and 12. The middle half of the children reading *Charlie and His Kitten*, *Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse*, and *Racketty Packetty House*, were all of fourth and fifth grade reading ability and about two years younger than those who read *Puck*. Furthermore, the majority of the children reading *Puck* didn't like it. When our critics, in the face of these data, clearly published in the Book List, accuse us of classifying *Puck of Pook's Hill* as the equivalent of the other books, they are not giving an accurate impression.

To prove that the grading is self-contradictory our critics cite *Sara Crewe* and *The Little Princess* as being really the same book under different titles, yet classified in two different grades. We have the two books before us as we write—they are not the same at all. One begins, for example, "Once on a dark winter's day;" the other: "In the first place Miss Minchin lived in London." One contains 114 medium sized pages of rather large type, the other 266 large pages of smaller type.

To quote our critics again: "*So-fat and Mew-Mew* published by Heath is placed in reading grade 3, while *Bow-wow and Mew-mew* published by Flanagan is placed in grade 4. These two books, the compilers failed to note, are identical though under different titles. Though *Bow-wow and Mew-Mew* is two grades younger in type and form, it is put one reading grade above the more difficult one. Examples such as these cast grave doubts on the adequacy even of the authors' reading tests."

The difference in the grading of the two editions of *Bow-wow and Mew-Mew* is within the limit of error given in the introduction (p. 22). "The spread of reading ability and the standard deviations for various books showed that almost any book which was classified in one grade could be

read and enjoyed by many children in the grade above and below." A variation of one grade was therefore not great enough to make the grading unreliable.

The average reading grade of the children (boys and girls combined) who enjoyed *So-fat and Mew-Mew* was 3.8; the reading grade assigned to *Bow-wow and Mew-Mew* was 4.3. The difference is exactly half a grade. Since the limit of error is stated to be within a grade of the average, can such a difference legitimately "cast grave doubts on the adequacy even of the authors' reading tests"? (Incidentally, they weren't "the authors' reading tests" but the Stanford Silent Reading Tests, which have, of course, been adequately standardized for validity and reliability.)

Our critics try to prove the unreliability of our grading by citing chance books which they claim are misplaced. The reliability of grading cannot be determined by chance examples. Careful statistical checks are necessary to prove reliability. Such checks have been made, and are reported fully in the introduction.

As a further check on the reliability of the grading in the Book List, a study of the relative difficulty of typical books from each grade has just been completed.

The one most reliable measure of difficulty is the number of different words occurring in a thousand sample words chosen at random from each book. There is a high degree of relationship existing between this measure of vocabulary difficulty and reading ability of children who read and enjoy the book.

The data on the books which were considered as misplaced by our critics are illuminating. Let us consider *Puck of Pook's Hill*, (grade 5.8 on the list), *Little House in the Woods* (grade 5.4 on the list) and *Buccaneers and Pirates of our Coast* (grade 5.9 on the list.) The average number of different words in a thousand for fifth grade books is 408, for sixth grade is 416,

for seventh grade, 440. In the sampling from *Puck of Pook's Hill* we find 411 different words, in *Little House in the Woods* 409, and in *Buccaneers and Pirates of our Coast* 422. These figures which indicate to a large extent the relative difficulty of the books, tend to confirm the grading in the Book List.

Since every check which we have applied has proved the grading reliable within one reading grade of the average, does it not seem legitimate to place the facts ahead of personal judgment?

3. The "index of popularity" is indefensible. Our critics say, "Probably the main scientific error in the book is the index of popularity. Since the entire work is threaded on this index and since the authors state that it shows better than any one factor how widely the book is read and liked it seems necessary to state what it is. The index was obtained by multiplying the number of children liking a book by the number of cities in which it was read."

The statement that "the entire work is threaded on the index of popularity" is misleading. The basic classification is on the reading ability of the children. It is *within* the grade and age lists that the index of popularity is used, as a scheme of arrangement. The reasons for using it are clearly set forth on pages 32 and 33 of the introduction to the Book List.

There is an attempt to discredit the "index of popularity" by showing that it does not agree with the "interest value" in the case of certain books. Of course they do not necessarily agree; one measures popularity—how widely the book is read and liked; the other measures the degree of liking by the children (few or many) who read the book. A book may, and often does, appeal to only a small number of children, yet it may appeal very strongly to those few.

It is interesting to note that the index of popularity, despite our critics' condem-



## AN OPEN FORUM ON THE WINNETKA LIST

Elementary-Normal School Section of the National Council  
of Teachers of English

*Minutes of Meeting Held in Philadelphia, November 26, 1926*  
*Reported by Carrie Belle Parks*  
*Indiana, Pennsylvania*

THE MEETING was called to order by Mr. C. C. Certain, who spoke briefly of the widespread discussion of recent investigations of children's preferences in reading. He read a letter from the deputy Superintendent of Schools of San Francisco, addressed to the Elementary and Normal School Section of the National Council of Teachers of English which expressed interest in the Winnetka Book List, and stated the desire to place a copy of the List in every school in San Francisco. Mr. Certain put the following question to the meeting: Shall The Winnetka Book List be recommended unqualifiedly?

The first speaker was Miss Mabel Vogel, of the Winnetka Public Schools. She spoke in part as follows:

The study made at Winnetka is an attempt to fit reading material to the children. The American Library Association acted as adviser in the investigation, and the Carnegie Corporation financed it.

In the effort to find out what children are actually reading, we tested over 30,000 children in 34 cities. Each child was given a Stanford Reading Test, and each was asked to fill out a ballot stating his like or dislike of each book he read during the year. One hundred thousand ballots were thus obtained on 9,000 books. Seven hundred books had 25 or more ballots.

The Interest Value indicates the degree of liking; i.e. if everybody checked it as one of the best books, it would score 100% in Interest Value. The Index of Popularity indicates in how many of the 34 cities the

book was read. This does not indicate the degree of interest, which is shown only by the Interest Value. Twenty-eight children may vote a book a higher Interest Value than forty children.

We urge people, in using the List, to look at all of the data.

In order to eliminate books not suitable, we asked twelve librarians of recognized ability to check the List. They ranked the titles on the List as follows: Rank 1 indicates exceptional literary value; rank 2, suitable literary value; rank 3, unsuitable literary value; rank 4, unsuitable content. Thirty-five titles were given rank one. Since such a small number would not make an adequate list of preferred books, 110 titles of the two upper ranks were starred, thus forming a list of recommended books for children's reading.

One hundred titles, ranked 3 or 4 by three-fourths of the librarians formed a "trash list," and was not included in the published Winnetka Book List. This "trash list" may be obtained in mimeograph form.

We have been criticized because of the poor quality of the children's comments. We realize that these comments are poor, and that children make poor comments. However, these serve our purpose: to give an idea of the book.

Cheap editions were listed in some cases because there were not enough ballots on any particular edition. Both expensive and cheap editions were listed on the advice of the A. L. A.

The most important feature of the Winnetka Book List is the investigations which may be based upon it. There is now in progress an investigation of the qualities which make a book difficult. One study is being made of the number of different words occurring per 1,000 words of text at different grade levels. We are also undertaking to find out how many words, not in the Thorndike word list, are to be found per 1,000 words of text in books for different grades. Studies have been made of the occurrence of different parts of speech in books read at different grades. We hope to work out an equation whereby we can predict the average reading ability necessary to enjoy a certain book.

These data have a present and a future value.

Dr. Willis Uhl of the University of Wisconsin spoke on the question, "Is the Winnetka List Satisfactory?" as follows:

Although this account of the making of the List has set some matters in a clearer light, there must be a partially negative answer to our question.

The lower grade titles are only text-books. In this field, an investigation is balked at the outset because of lack of suitable books of text-book and non-text-book types.

Another difficulty is that 30,000 children cannot give satisfactory judgments, and have not seen all the books. Some books were read in one locality, and some in others. Several titles on Jordan's list or on the Wisconsin list were not mentioned.

The objection to the list may be summed up in two equations:

First: a certain number of variables equal the Winnetka Book List. These variables are: *a* content; *b* children of different intelligence quotients, reading quotients and so forth (*b* should therefore be expressed:  $b^{1+1+2 \dots x}$ ); *c* physical aspect of the book; *d* editing; *e* conditions under which book was read; *f* season of the year; *g* day on which book was read; *h*

current interest; *i* introduction given to the book; *j* neighborhood; *k* library and librarian; *l* accessibility; *m* children's teachers. The equation might therefore be stated:  $[a^{(1+2+3 \dots x)}][b^{(1+2+3 \dots x)}][c^{(1+2+3 \dots x)}]$  etc. = *Winnetka List*.

With all these variables in mind we must say that the List is unsatisfactory. Such work cannot be done completely in any one study and without comparison with other investigations. The List does, however, represent a milestone in our progress towards something—we know not what.

The second equation represents the number of variables that equal the ultimate worth of a book. Where criteria are not objective, the variables equalling ultimate worth are: *a* content (story, plot, etc.); *b* literary value (style, vocabulary, etc.); *c* social worth (teaching of ideals of conduct); *d* practicability of making book generally available; *e* pupils; *f* teachers. The equation would be, therefore  $[a^{(1+2+3)x}][b^{(1+2+3)x}][c^{(1+2+3)x}]$  etc. = *ultimate worth*.

These variables make a total variable whose product is ultimate worth. Until it is possible to control the variables, we must accept the Winnetka List as suggestive rather than authoritative and final.

Following Dr. Uhl's paper, there was general discussion.

It was suggested that, in reply to the letter from the Deputy Superintendent of Schools of San Francisco, it would be advisable for schools to have the Winnetka Book List and with it a complete file of all important investigations of children's literary preferences. The audience was pleased to draw the inference that the placing of book lists in the hands of the teachers in San Francisco meant that the school officials there were determined that the children in them should have books in abundance, and of the right interest appeal.

Dr. Lewis of Philadelphia asked for information as to the relative value of these investigations. Dr. Uhl answered that we

must still make our own judgments, because we have not yet investigated the variables. Dr. Lewis said he had recently had to investigate a certain title (Aldrich's *Story of a Bad Boy*) and was not able to find it in Jordan's list. Dr. Uhl said that neglected titles should not be disregarded as unimportant, but that teachers should try out titles on which there was no data. *The Story of a Bad Boy* might be compared, as to certain qualities, with books already on one of the published lists.

Miss Vogel gave the Winnetka data on Aldrich's book. Dr. Florence Bamberger added that after the study made in Baltimore, *The Story of a Bad Boy* had been placed in the 7th grade at the top of the list of the twenty most popular books.

Mr. Certain asked why the "trash list" of the Winnetka Book List was not published, since we were requested to consider all of the data. Miss Vogel replied that the investigators wanted the list to be usable, and not merely a study. She added that it was difficult to get even experts to agree as to what was trash, and what was not. Mr. Certain expressed a desire to publish the list for purposes of study since children voted many books on this list an interest value of 98. Dr. Bamberger urged publication of the "trash list" for the purpose of discovering in what respects the books were trashy, and furthermore, discovering why children liked them. Before leaving the meeting the audience signed written requests for the printed list.

It was asked why the plan of having children give opinions through a ballot was used instead of getting spontaneous comment. Miss Vogel replied that spontaneous comment was difficult to tabulate, but added that perhaps not enough choice was allowed on the ballot. She cited an instance of a

child who wrote "very hard" under the heading "teacher," and intended it as a comment on the teacher, not on the book. She said that the investigators were unable to do anything with the difficulty rating, and felt that teachers had more objective means of studying difficulty.

Miss Vogel was asked if there was any data as to reasons for disliking certain books, or any data as to the method of presentation. The object was not to measure methods of teaching literature, Miss Vogel replied, but to study the content of books which might influence children's choices of them.

Mr. Pendleton commented that a scholarly attitude, such as Dr. Uhl exhibited, had the fault of seeing too much, and therefore did not tend toward vigorous leadership. The public schools, he said, need leadership, even if it is partly wrong. The Winnetka investigators should be commended for being willing to plunge in, even knowing that variables were going to fly up and catch them. The List, he said, was a milestone in the avenue of progress, in spite of its limitations. The List had suffered from over-publicity, which was regrettable, for a reaction was likely to follow in proportion to the enthusiasm. He considered that the Winnetka List had been rated lower than it deserved because it had been regarded by some as a panacea. This list could not be depended upon as final, but it had produced study and interest, and librarians and teachers would do a better job because of it.

Mrs. Miriam Blanton Huber spoke upon Children's Choices in Poetry,\* and following her address, Dr. Florence Bamberger gave a Summary of Investigations in Children's Reading, which will be printed in a forthcoming issue of THE REVIEW.

\* See page 24.



## NOTES ON EDITIONS

JASMINE BRITTON

*Los Angeles City School Library*

WE HAVE talked frequently about books for children. Such stimulating arguments as we have had; the delightful divergence of personal opinions which have arisen because of our different childhoods! I believe we have found the discussions clarified our minds and provided us with standards in evaluating children's books which we could have gained in no other way. Because we have evolved these standards from our experience they are to us very real and live.

Such times as we have had exploring the new books each season; new books which were still unknown and beckoned alluringly! But finally it simmered down to "once in a blue moon" discovering a book of enough vigorous vitality or whimsical charm to survive.

Then one day we glimpsed how important it was, in books for children, after the right title had been agreed upon, next to distinguish the best among a multitude of editions. Such a mob of King Arthur's, Arabian Nights, and Greek heroes as there were, insisting because of their honorable ancestry that they be given first place! We were struck by the great number of stories which the youngsters were affectionately taking to their hearts even as we had taken these same stories thirty years before and our mothers and fathers before that—tales of ancient days which began before there were books; tales of more recent date around 1675 when Perrault captured with direct simplicity the everlasting stories of Mother Goose. We considered the nice distinctions between various editions of the same story. We discovered that the majority of children's classics were not written for children at all; that Bernard Shaw

was rather right when he said "The first requirement of a children's library is that there shall be no children's books there." Robin Hood, Robinson Crusoe, Ulysses and Siegfried, figures of heroic stature, always have been claimed by youth and old age alike. They are universal.

In classics which were translated, we agreed that the spirit of the original be caught as nearly as possible and that, while judicious editing was often desirable in omitting uneventful or unsuitable portions, we would not accept adaptations or retold versions of stories for young children which they would grow up to in a few years.

We found the selection of folk tales by Grimm and Lang and stories from Arabian Nights needed to be carefully looked over or someone would bring to our attention coarse gruesome tales which were entirely ugly and liable to haunt sensitively imaginative children. Then it was finally agreed that some tragic tales, which a ten or twelve year old was prepared to face, could not wisely be given to younger children. Of course we allowed the wicked witch, symbolizing evil, to be properly punished at the end and the logical conclusion of wrong doing was not changed in order to bring a happy ending. Nemesis for wrong doing is one of the truths of life, the force of which we can understand very early.

What a rich field children's books have always provided for the illustrator! Some of the loveliest work today is to be found in the books for our boys and girls. In the picture books for little children we find many elaborate editions of nursery rhymes, some intricate—as many of Walter

Crane's are—and others garishly close to the funny page. When we make our final selection we find little children most enjoy strong color and simple lines, with a rollicking action and humor. Pictures which are tipped in are never desirable for little children whose small fingers do not always behave.

The size of the type is one of the mechanical features which plays a part in whether or not the book is read. Type that is crowded, narrow margins, a page that looks as if it had no conversation on it, a dingy, dark colored binding, one or all of these discourage children from digging in to the story. There is type that looks comfortable to the young eyes just mastering the mechanics of reading and especially to the foreign child that is struggling with a strange language as well.

If the standard stories of Scott, Dickens, and Cooper are to be read by the coming generation, the wise librarian knows she

must snare the children with an attractive book into which type and illustrations invite them to dip.

The price of the book often plays a part in determining the edition we can afford. A restricted budget is a chronic condition in every school and library in the country. If a large number of duplicate copies is needed, it is then sternly essential that we weigh the values among several editions of the same book. One is vetoed because it is not substantially bound; another because it is too expensive; "nice but not necessary" is the phrase on which we make some of our decisions.

The improvement in the printing of children's books and especially of school books, has been very marked in the last decade. There are quantities of editions from which to choose. It becomes the discriminating thoughtful task of the librarian to decide on values. Judgment in editions is one of the tests of the person who loves and lives with books.

## METHODS OF STUDYING CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN READING

(Continued from Page 5)

different conditions i.e., in another country, among children of another race and by other methods, coincide very often with the results of the extensive American researches on this subject. For instance: (1) We also note the difference between boys' and girls' literature interests. (2) The books noted by the "Winnetka Graded Book List" and by the "Children's Reading" as those preferred by children are, translated in to Russian, also found to be favourites of Russian children.

Such are: "Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain, "Little Women" by Louisa M. Alcott, "Robinson Crusoe" by Daniel Defoe,

"Black Beauty" by Anna Sewell, "Hans Brinker" by Mary Mapes Dodge, "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson, "Jungle Book" by Rudyard Kipling, "Pinocchio" by Collodi, "Dutch Twins" by Perkins, "Call of the Wild" by J. London, and others.

Of course, many Russian books should be added to this list of Russian children's favourites.

The fact of this coincidence proves that there are elements in books which appeal to every child of a certain age, that there are laws in children's reading interest, which we can study and which we must know.



## THE DRAMA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

MORILLAE WALKER

Winona, Minnesota

TO ME the drama has always been a source of keenest delight, a thing to be lived and loved. That it might have a value, *an educational significance*, has never figured in my attention to it and, but for my study of the principles of education, which has led me to consider a different viewpoint of many things, I should probably have continued to enjoy merely, and in ignorance. In this paper, I have tried to organize some of the results of my reading and thought upon the subject. Doubtless to one with a naturally analytical mind, much of the material may seem to be obvious, but for me it is new, in some cases original, and always fascinating. I have developed the discussion in two parts: part one deals with the place of drama down through the ages; part two, with the place of drama in the present educational system in school and community.

### PART ONE

#### *The Place of Drama through the Ages*

"Then will he fit his tongue  
To dialogues of business, love, or strife:  
But it will not be long  
Ere this be thrown aside  
And with new joy and pride  
The little actor cons another part;  
Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'  
With all the Persons, down to palsied age,  
That Life brings with her in her equipage;  
As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation."  
Wordsworth: "*Intimations of Immortality*".

The drama is instinctive to man. It is perfectly natural for him to act—"filling from time to time his humorous stage." From the time he is a child making believe he is an Indian, or an admiral, or a pioneer, until he is a man assuming the pose of protector, he is guided by his dramatic in-

stinct. It develops in various ways in the man as in the race. First comes imitation, the child waving his hand "bye-bye" as Mother does, the early man in the pantomimic stage. Then follows the development of the dressing-up stage, the little girl in her grandmother's hoops, the little boy in his Indian outfit, the barbarian in his necklace of teeth, his feathers, and his paint. Very early comes the vocal contribution to the advancement of the dramatic, the monologue of the early man to the listeners about the camp-fire, followed by the spirited dialogue when another disagreed. As the text was often a story, the teller learned to develop plot in order to hold interest; exaggeration and invention sprang up, and the dramatic was again furthered.

And so it is not difficult to agree with Professor Hirn, an investigator, that the drama is the earliest of the arts, that a rude pantomime accompanied perhaps by a dance or chant may be older than language itself. Greece it was which originated the traditions that influenced later drama. Quite properly, Greece may be called the Mother of the Drama.

The first signs of drama were the commemoration choruses of youths chanting and dancing in impromptu and spontaneous fashion. The most striking of the impromptu tended to become traditional, altered only by the most inventive revelers. The most ingenious member gradually became the leader, and he in turn outlined the conduct of the dance and song, often himself writing the lyrics. Costumes and staining of body soon followed. The leader and chorus began to carry on a colloquy and the former to act out the legend of the god's life. Thespis was the first to assume

several characters in turn, using a different mask for each. Then the forming of a cast began. The director was evolved. As some mode of differentiation was necessary, the tragedian wore a laced boot called a buskin, with a very thick sole, and the comedian wore a low heeled light shoe called a sock. Gradually there grew the play form, the chorus was abandoned, and finally we have the Greek theatre in its highest form at Athens.

The Greeks were clever and witty, and well qualified for both comedy and tragedy; their language was easy and flexible. The Romans who conquered them were charmed by them, but were themselves serious, and their language grave, concise, and lacking in fluidity. Latin, like the robust race which spoke it, was sturdily implacable. The Romans lacked a sense of humor and preferred the coarser rustic plays. But though their previous attitude toward art had been indifferent, their contact with the Greeks gave them an insight into the beauty of this other civilization. So, being practical, they imported it bag and baggage, so to speak, including the drama. Of a necessity, a change was made in the manners and the delicacy, and we find a strangely unreal drama in this period of Roman Supremacy. It is extremely coarse, very obvious, performed with masks, and appealing directly to the uneducated classes. So, while the Greek drama was translated, the new Roman creation had its own local color, its own life, and its own tendencies. We eventually find Plautus and Terence instead of Menander and Aristophanes.

When Constantine overcame Rome in 476 A.D., the church closed the theater. It seemed as though the drama were irreparably dead. For over a thousand years Europe was overrun by crude barbarians. But because the desire for the drama is so instinctive in human nature the world over, there were still some traces of it in the acrobats, wandering minstrels, roving ani-

mal trainers and the like, who were always popular. Dramatic literature however, was dead; the art of acting was lost, and the theater remained in ruins for years. When medieval drama sprang up, it was therefore uninfluenced by the Greeks. Religious in nature, it remained inside the church for many years, the story of its development being much the same throughout Europe. A brief survey of England, therefore, will indicate the development in Spain, France, and Italy.

At first the plays were performed entirely inside the churches but gradually they drifted to the outside. The performers were first those connected with the church who tried to teach a lesson to the masses by appealing to the eye as well as to the ear. In England, town guilds took up these religious plays for performance. Everywhere throughout the country, under the Tudors, there was acting,—acting of miracle, mystery, and morality plays. From their scant repertory, little bands of traveling professional players presented a play here and a play there. It was to this sort of company that Hamlet gave his famous advice: "Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounce it to you," etc. The acting was unfelt and the material used barren of dramatic possibilities. Actors and audience were waiting for an English poet who would realize the possibilities of the drama.

The sixteenth century saw a great awakening in the world. Curiosity, exploration, and colonization became the things of the day. Men longed for life at its fullest. Into this pregnant situation stepped men such as Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare, the first two writing in the classic style and the latter breaking loose from stage tradition. All too soon did this brilliancy die. In 1642, the Puritans closed the theaters. In 1660, they were again opened by the royalty, but the coarseness of the age spoiled the Restoration drama. In the time of Queen Anne only two playwrights whose works have lived were produced, Sheridan

with his "The Rivals" and "A School for Scandal", and Goldsmith with his "She Stoops to Conquer". The great dramatic age had passed, and prose developed in its stead.

The modern drama is extremely interesting. Its development has been accompanied by the realization that the drama has a significance which will not be denied. It is one of the most effective, most lasting means of communication and representation.

#### PART TWO

##### *The Place of Drama in Present Day Education*

"I had a little tea party  
This afternoon at three;  
'Twas very small, three guests in all  
Just I, myself, and me.  
Myself ate up the sandwiches  
While I drank up the tea;  
'Twas also I ate up the pie  
And passed the cake to me."

Among those who are realizing the significance of such "pretend" games as these verses describe are the educators of America,—the teachers and the community workers. I should like to summarize some of the activities which are being carried on or which should be carried on in schools, and something of the place of drama in the community, based on the principle that the drama has a place and can be used more effectively than can any other one element.

From the kindergarten up, the dramatic fascinates the child. Many of the charming group games he learns are genuine dramatic art. There is in them the element of gesture, purposeless and uncontrolled at first, but easily organized and directed in order to turn into artistic expression the child's ceaseless activity. Every good game has, too, an orderly process and a climax, some add a rhythmic chant or a pretty verse. In and just beyond the lower grades comes the interest in impersonation. Children do not copy something else or someone else; they are something else or someone else. McClintick says, "When two little girls I know, after an afternoon

of unceasing and strenuous impersonation of a repertoire ranging from a door-mat and a cake of ice in the Delaware on through the ghost of the murdered Banquo, were finally obliged to sit down in utter weariness, one of them suggested, 'Now let's play we're just plain little girls'." This tendency of children may be utilized in the study of literature and in literary appreciation. This work will assume reality. The kindergarten has long used the pantomimes of "Bo-Peep" and "Little Boy Blue", flocks of butterflies and birds, but all too often upon entrance into the first grade the child has been made to feel that these are "baby" performances. The substitution of the dramatic monologue, the recitation, is not sufficient to meet the needs of the child.

Charades are much too seldom used, for they contain so many elements of educational value: vocabulary additions, sugar-coated attention to spelling, need for invention of dialogue, and best of all, apt pantomime, genuine dramatic gesture, and fun. Impromptu dramatization of stories will bring about a spontaneity, and a permanency of effect to be coveted by the thinking teacher. There are, too, a few little plays, folk-tale dramatizations mostly, which may well be used. But for the most part, the teacher and class should make their own plays. Co-operatively produced drama gives the most valuable returns possible in the appreciation of plot and character activity. In recasting a story as a play, the pupil comes to see the divisions and subdivisions forming a complete whole with emphasis on structure and organization. He may take an historical fact, a story, or evolve a plot of his own. There will be little characterization. As many of the class as possible should be included. "Briar-Rose" is a fine play in this respect for third and fourth grades.

The children are happier if there can be some semblance of a stage. It takes little, with little people, to create an illusion. A feather transforms the six-year-old into a



red-blooded Indian. A potted plant becomes an Arden. As the children grow older, unfortunately, they lose some of their imaginativeness and require more elaborate and realistic properties and costumes. As many of these as possible should be made by themselves. This requires thought and dramatic consciousness.

Up through the sixth or seventh grades. (depending on the kind of home and teachers) the plays should be of the epic kind, but in the eighth grade and bridging over into high school, there may be a change. Adolescent readjustments are being made and epic directness and singleness no longer seem appropriate or adequate. The child is ready for the inner things of the literary drama, things which will help him to understand the bewildering aspects of his own nature and environment, of which he has so recently become conscious. "Hamlet" is too complex still, but "Julius Caesar", "Merchant of Venice", "William Tell", and the "Wallenstein" plays are now within his grasp. Chosen dialogues and monologues should be given orally in order to appeal to ear as well as to intellect. Whenever possible, dramatic performances should be produced before a public. Study and effort are deserving of public presentation. To train a child in social art, one must lead him to turn back what he has gained into a community asset. The 'drama way' is so simple that this opportunity for education should not be lost.

There is a place for drama in community life. Percy Mackaye says, "What the world is waiting for is to be found, I believe, in the basic method of social service involved in Community Drama." This means co-operation and organization. Though it has had much publicity, it has had little philosophic regard. This social movement is sometimes called pageantry, but it lacks authentic interpretation. The revival of pageantry was undertaken as a deliberate attempt to create a community art, never intending to be a competitor of the theatre. All the members of the community should

be allowed to unite in the creation of the pageant or drama celebrating not the fame of an individual but the past history of their own community, for instance. Pageantry may take the form of festivals or celebrations of special occasions. Christmas day may well be made more of a community celebration. But whatever form the activity takes, it should be the work of the community itself from the writing of the text to the finished production. If this does not seem possible at first, such plays as "Caliban of the Yellow Sands" by Percy Mackaye, written especially for citizen presentation and much used, may be attempted.\* The fruitful results of so many people thus working together are amazing. One night after the performance of the above play, a Scotch workman who had been in one of the mob scenes said, "A funny thing this, I wouldna have thought till now that those dagoes could be such damn good fellers. We're proposin' to form a permanent club—us Scotch and the dagoes and German lads—just to keep in touch and not let us forget this." Neighborliness is the keyword.

So, the drama is coming into its own. Let's help it along. There is one organization which has been formed for this very purpose, the Drama League of America. Its purpose is "to stimulate an interest in the best drama and to awaken the public to the importance of the drama as a social force and to its great educational value if maintained on the high level of art and morals." It would seem that the dramatic consciousness is beginning to make itself manifest, and in its entirety it is well.

"For ill can poetry express

Full many a line of thought sublime,  
And Painting, mute and motionless  
Steals but a glance of time!  
But by the mighty actor brought,  
Illusion's perfect triumphs come;  
Verse ceases to be airy thought  
And Sculpture to be dumb!"

\* Mrs. C. B. Charpenning of Hull House, Chicago, began work of this sort while at Winona, Minn., and now trains leaders to undertake it.

## THE PREVISION STEP IN COMPOSITION

BEULAH HICKOK\*

MANY TEACHERS of composition seem to think, after assigning a topic on which to talk or write, that there is nothing more for the teacher to do until the finished product is submitted for her correction. Then the merciless job of wrecking, if not destroying, begins. Much of this precious time that is hopelessly consumed in meticulous correction could be put to use in showing the pupils how to go about theme building. Much of the poor work that we find in students' themes is due to the subject's not having been worked out, nor even thought out in advance. Who is responsible for such poor habits of work? The teacher, most certainly, if she has done nothing but assign the topic.

One of the great criticisms of our schools is that the pupils do not acquire the habit of clear and penetrating thinking. Are we making the most of our time in the composition period to help them to gain this power?

Nor are the sins of omission the only ones committed at this important stage of writing and speaking. There is the very grave danger of requiring all of the pupils to write on the same subject, and to do so by following an outline placed on the board. With these sign posts of the composite ideas of the class before them the students are set the well-nigh impossible task of expanding ideas which are not their own. Uniform, stiff, and unnatural themes are the inevitable result. I found a glaring example of this in a set of sixth grade themes from a city school in Wisconsin. The first word in the title "The North

Bound Robin" ought to have prepared me for the monotonous treatment of this subject. By the time I had read the second paper I realized they were all telling about the same robin. This robin lived in an orange tree in Florida near Tampa. He flew straight to the Mississippi River and up that valley to the Illinois River. He stopped at Springfield and saw the Lincoln monument, at Elgin and saw the watch factory, and at Joliet where he saw the penitentiary. He visited Lincoln Park in Chicago. When he arrived at the old nest in an apple orchard in Racine, he found that his home was in such bad condition that he had to build a new one.

Of the two evils—too much help and too little help in prevision I consider the latter to be the less injurious. With too little help the child may flounder and become discouraged, but at least he is not forming the pernicious habit of letting some one else do his thinking for him.

What puzzles the teacher most is how to steer a middle course. If we stop to ask ourselves how we go about the preparation of a talk or some written work, we may discover some general principles upon which to base our procedure. I remember that, whenever I was required in school to hand in an outline with my theme, I invariably planned the theme in my usual way. After I had finished the composition I made a formal outline to go with it. Hard as I tried, I could do it in no other way. What seems to an individual to be the most natural plan for getting the desired results ought, then, to be *his* way.

We are not so concerned as to how a pupil plans as we are that he does plan, sufficiently, and with the right attitude all

\* This paper was written for a course on the teaching of English, given by Dr. S. A. Leonard at the University of Wisconsin during the summer of 1925.



the while. Where there is an overmastering desire in the pupils to accomplish some bit of composition for a very definite end in view, the work of prevision is carried on naturally without a consciousness that it is prevision. It is done with satisfaction, if not joy, in the anticipation of the successful outcome.

The secret, then, in getting children used to the idea of careful planning is to provide enjoyable situations where the project challenges them to be self reliant in having ideas of their own. This can best be done by having a real audience, or an imaginary one, whenever possible.

In the lower grades, in telling about a class trip, the children have had the experience of getting ready for the trip. They have felt the need and seen the result of such preparation. Now, when they decide to tell about this experience to those who did not go, the getting-ready part is not entirely new to them. They soon get to feel that careful thinking beforehand makes a successful party, trip, entertainment, or dramatization. If the teacher should find it necessary to preface the preparation of a composition with arguments to prove the worth-whileness of such a step, it seems that the motive for their speaking or writing must be weak.

There are many opportunities for securing real purposes for compositions. The audience, real or imaginary, may be, besides their own group, another group of children, the school assembly, crippled children in a hospital or absent pupils, or such grown-ups as parents and friends. At the annual exhibit in a Brooklyn school the children explained their experiments in elementary science and took turns in explaining other demonstrations of their work in different subjects. On other occasions certain pupils gave travel talks with the use of slides and thus shared the good times which they had had with their classmates and others. In our sixth grade "Speakwell Club" there was a special op-

portunity once a week for each member of the class to contribute something worthwhile to the program. The social activities in every grade throughout the school furnish a number of incentives for composition with the prevision problem sometimes uppermost. Some of these are the speeches urging the support of school activities. A good example of a project necessitating vitalized prevision is the inter class discussion contests which are held in certain city schools. The speakers are allowed a day or two for preparation. Each student must take part, and there is considerable rivalry among the classes in striving to have the most winners.

Granted that there is eagerness to start a plan for a composition, how shall we help them to begin? Let us first consider the simplest lesson with primary children. Suppose the children have decided to tell another group about their trip to the Botanical Gardens. They can be led to see that the account of the trip is too long for one pupil to give, and so needs dividing into parts. The teacher suggests that they tell the things they did in the order in which they occurred. She writes these on the board as they are dictated by the class, such as "We went on the street car. We saw some yellow tulips first. Miss Dow told us about the Iris. We went to the Japanese Garden. We walked over a funny bridge. The water was like a looking-glass. It looked like flowers in it. We saw pergolas. The last thing we did was to ride in the Swan boat." The incidents of the trip are thus divided, and the children can then choose their speakers. Each speaker practices his part of the group talk.

In another lesson of this kind the children could name the part each wished to tell about. By discussion they find that the order in which they speak depends on what part of the story they have chosen.

Such group planning of class productions ought to give pupils initiative in in-

dividual work of this nature, such as telling personal experiences like "How My Dog Found Me." If there is stimulation of the right sort it ought not to take them too long to think of what they will tell about. As soon as each is ready he may come and whisper to the teacher what his story is about.

With much profitable practice in the primary grades by the time they reach the fourth grade we ought to be able to center the pupils' attention on a few of the details of a plan. To be ready for this stage of conscious prevision they need many exercises like those described by Mr. Leonard in "English Composition as a Social Problem." Mr. Leonard advocates letting the class discover the plan in very familiar stories and also letting them make a plan sentence for their own incidents. This is writing what they gave orally or whispered to the teacher before they reached this growth stage.

We may now emphasize the importance of having an attractive title and an interesting beginning sentence. To read to them short paragraphs written by children of their own age is an effective way of getting these points before them. They soon realize what it is that makes them like some compositions and dislike others. Sheridan's "Speaking and Writing English" has a number of pupils' paragraphs which are good for this purpose. Pupils may be taught when planning a beginning sentence that, like the title, it should make us want to read more, and that it should not tell too much. It is well to save the very best part for the last. I have found it a good plan to let children wait until they have finished before deciding what to call their paragraphs, if they must have names. They like to write several titles at the close and have me indicate which is my choice.

A still more advanced step in preparatory work may be seen in the following assignment: An imaginary conversation between a horse and an automobile. The teacher asked the pupils to think of several

things an automobile can do that a horse cannot, and to jot these down in a list, on a piece of scratch paper, perhaps. Next the children put in a list some advantages a horse has over a nautomobile. It was then necessary to decide whether this composition was to be a friendly conversation or an unpleasant disagreement. Where should they begin to talk? Which one will begin the conversation? How? How shall it end, abruptly or otherwise? These decisions were jotted down, and the opening sentences submitted to the teacher before the pupils continued the writing.

Those of the abler pupils may plan other compositions of this kind in their extra time. It is surprising what good subjects they will suggest, for example—"A Piece of Coal and a Stick of Wood," "An Airplane and a Railroad Train," "A Cat and a Dog," "A Sun Dial and a Clock," "A Vietrola and a Radio," and "Country Life and City Life." Much practice in the planning, without the writing and revision, is particularly good with such subjects as those mentioned.

When a pupil reaches the seventh grade, his ability to collect and sort ideas on a limited subject can be still further developed. Here, as in the lower grades, the individual work should be preceded by enough group composition to give confidence in working independently. A good beginning would be exercises in narrowing subjects which cover too much. Show how to do this by doing one yourself before the pupils. For example, the subject "Inventions," can be narrowed to *Recent Inventions*. One of these is *radio*, and this may be still further narrowed to such topics as kinds of radio, benefits of radio, how radio helps the farmers, etc.

Having decided on a subject which is specific and narrow in its scope the teacher may next demonstrate on the board one way, her way perhaps, of taking an inventory of her mind on that particular subject. She jots down each idea as it comes to her, whether a word, a phrase, or a

sentence, and continues until the supply seems exhausted. Then with the help of the class she decides which are not effective and strikes them out. As new ideas occur these are scribbled down before they escape. Thus the sifting process goes on. Here the class ought to see the necessity for choosing a subject about which they have a great many ideas so that when the sifting is done, enough will remain to sort and arrange into a compact product.

Pupils need to see that it is as important to know what to leave out as it is to know what to put in. This may be more easily determined by the writer's asking, "What are the needs or interests of my audience or readers? What do they already know on the subject?" The arrangement and emphasis of the points will depend on the purpose of the writer or his point of view. Encourage children to get the few principal units clearly in mind. This will avoid magnifying trifles and depreciating important points. Two things we need to keep always in mind to guide us in holding to the point. These are the *subject* and the *audience*.

A good way to avoid rewriting the topics so as to have them in their proper order is to indicate the final place of each by a number. A still better way, particularly if the themes are to be long, with a number of sub-heads, is to put each division of the outline on a separate card or a small slip of paper. In this way they can be shifted over and over until their proper places are established. Students need to be warned against considering the first expression of an idea satisfactory and unalterable. The first draft is valuable as "something to add to or subtract from, to agree to or differ from."

Practice should be given the students in preparing reports about which they have some knowledge and need to get more. In addition to putting down what is already known, the pupils will find it helpful to make a list of questions which they hope to have answered by reading, conversation,

and observation. Having done this they should find out what material is available, by using such standard books as "Who's Who in America," and the Encyclopedias, by consulting the card catalogue and the Reader's Guide in the school library. Eighth grade history, geography, and general science lessons may be prepared in this way, each pupil talking on a different topic, while the others are required to take notes and answer questions on the reports.

Since there has been too much theme writing with too little thought given to the choice and rejection of ideas, we are justified, it seems to me, in giving a great deal of practice on the prevision step without carrying the process further.

Besides the help given to pupils in the actual work of prevision there is a variety of exercises which ought to be of great value to them, although not given for that immediate purpose. In Lyman's "The Mind at Work" there is a vigorous article by F. E. Bolton in which he advocates a separate course in college called thinking. This is in line with Mr. Leonard's plan to separate the teaching of reading from the literature by having a special period for those who need to learn how to get the thought from the printed page. McMurtry found that children can group facts and points with a fair degree of ability. In "How to Study and Teaching How to Study" he tells about a group of ten year old children with no previous experience who learned to find the central thought in selected material from their text books in one month's time. Germane's experiment proves fairly convincingly by that grade pupils are deplorably lacking in their ability to organize what they read. The experimenter reached the following conclusion: "Pupils *must* be convinced that getting the author's meaning from the printed page is quite different from repeating expressions found there."

There are a few text books given over entirely to exercises in paraphrasing, summarizing, condensing, but these are far too



difficult for the grades. In the Lewis and Rowland Sixth Readers are some good suggestions and exercises for outlining. The Bolenius Sixth Reader also contains some helpful material for elementary grades.

It falls to the lot of the teacher of English to train those pupils who come to her unable to read. It is that special reading technique required in handling factual material that causes these handicapped ones the most difficulty. Therefore, would it not be a wise plan to base most of the exercises in paraphrasing, summarizing, and condensing on the history, geography, and arithmetic material with which they are struggling? There should be a great deal of questioning by the pupils, for their ability to formulate intelligent questions is one indication that they have some knowledge of the essential facts. In order to make his question understood the student must do some clear thinking himself. If he can question others effectively, he can gain in the ability to question himself, which is so vital to composition planning. Think what this intensive training of the mind would mean in the ability to handle the problems of prevision!

The most important points to keep in mind in this very great problem of the teacher of English are: that superimposed plans are dangerous; that the real secret

of successful planning is forceful motivation; that plans to be of value must be simple, individual, and the result of the pupil's own thinking; that any exercise which strengthens in the habit of thoroughness in thinking is of great value to the student in composition. When we teachers become more alert to seize opportunities of helping children to think through their problems, just so soon will our boys and girls reach that happy state in composition where they speak and write not because they "have to say something but because they have something to say."

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## CHILDREN'S CHOICES IN POETRY\*

MIRIAM BLANTON HUBER

*Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, Columbia University*

THE PRESENCE of poetry in the school curriculum needs no defense. Among thoughtful educators the question that deserves consideration is, *What poetry?* Shall we give to children abstract, colorless, moralistic poetry, or shall we give them verse throbbing with the vivid actuality of experience, the quality of living?

Two methods have formerly been employed in making a curriculum of poetry: imitation of courses of study in use in successful school systems, or a selection of material by individuals whose opinions are accepted as authoritative. The present day scientific spirit in education is skeptical of both. Present practice when evaluated by modern standards, may or may not be desirable, and expert opinion is most valuable when backed by objective evidence. A belief that children themselves may be able to select poetry that can function with meaning in their lives with more exactness than adults can choose it for them, led three of us to conduct for the past two years, an extensive experiment to determine the poetry most suitable for children in the elementary and junior high schools. I am much indebted for assistance to Dr. Herbert B. Bruner of the Bureau of Curriculum Research of Teachers College, Columbia University, and to Mr. Charles Madison Curry, formerly Professor of Literature in the Indiana State Normal School. Our experiment has utilized three factors: (1) the weight of present practice, (2) the consensus of expert opinion,—both of which factors were used in determining the body of material to be subjected to ex-

perimentation; (3) the selection and grade placement of poems within the limits of that carefully selected material determined by the reactions of children themselves.

Apparently, appreciation in literature is the subject that has longest resisted the application of objective educational measurement. Comparatively little progress has been made in the application of science to this field of education because of the attitude of teachers of the subject. In fact, there has even been sentiment that regarded such an attempt as an invasion of sacred territory.

It may be that measurement of emotion arising from appreciation of poetry is not either possible or desirable, but it has seemed without question to be profitable to determine children's *interests* in poetry. To this end, an investigation was made during the last two years in which 50,000 children, with the help of 1500 teachers, built a curriculum of poetry for each of the nine grades of the elementary and junior high schools.

The first step of this undertaking was distinctly one of *guidance*. Children's reactions were limited to a definite body of material, but that body of material was as extensive as it was possible to make it and determined in a thoroughly scientific manner.

The material of experimentation consisted of 100 poems in each grade, selected from two sources: (1) from the subjective opinions of experts in the field of children's reading; (2) from a study of present practice as shown in courses of study and text-books.

\* A paper read before the Elementary-Normal School section of the National Council of Teachers of English, November 25, 1926.



The resources of the Bureau of Curriculum Research of Teachers College, Columbia University, were utilized to make possible a thorough survey of present practice. In this Bureau were available practically every published course of study in America. Through a definite and extensive rating procedure, the thirty courses in literature ranking highest in curriculum merit in each grade I to IX inclusive were selected and tabulated for their poetry content. An equal number of text-books were selected and analyzed. The opinions of recognized leaders in children's literature dictated an additional third of the material, the latter consisting largely of modern verse and poetry not previously used by schools.

The 100 poems thought to be most suitable for each grade were published in experimental booklets and placed in the hands of 50,000 children in experimental centers geographically distributed over the United States.

Since both the opinion of experts and courses of study placed certain poems in more than one grade, several poems appeared in more than one experimental booklet. In addition to this, the procedure of experimentation was so worked out that each booklet was used over a range of five grades.

In general the plan of experimentation consisted of having the pupil come in contact with a certain number of poems and checking up to see which of these poems he liked best and which least. Twelve definite reactions from each child were recorded. These data were then handled by standard statistical methods so that each poem received a score comparable to the score received by every other poem in the experiment. The order in which the poems in each grade were liked was determined and the grade in which each poem was liked most. It is clear that the results are a composite of teacher and pupil judgments. That teachers may have influenced some

choices is admitted, and many other factors of conditioning must have been operative and must always be. A belief held in some quarters that the teaching of poetry throughout the United States is a conventionalized matter and that the uniform method consists of drawing moral lessons, is not borne out by these findings. Either the 50,000 children involved in our experiment were exceedingly fortunate in the teachers they had or they were entirely uninfluenced by their teachers since the results show their choices are clearly not in favor of abstract moralism but show an overwhelming preference for humor, joy in life, and love of human qualities. The truth of the matter, of course, is that the large number of cases involved in the experiment checked any constant tendency toward error and prevented the operation of any single constant factors.

Out of the 573 different poems used in the experiment, 38 received scores so low as to show clearly their undesirability for use in the elementary or junior high schools.<sup>1</sup>

The presence of a poem in this list does not signify that it is to be considered undesirable poetry, but that it is undesirable for use in the elementary and junior high schools. Much of it clearly belongs in the senior high school.

While the particular poems by Masfield, Garland, and De la Mare listed here were not acceptable to children, other verse by each of these distinguished writers stood high in their preferences. It is interesting to note, also, that while Riley is the outstanding poet in children's interest, with Longfellow second, nevertheless, there are individual poems by both poets that children will not tolerate.

On the whole, children seem to prefer poems of some length. The exquisite lyric that mirrors a mood in a few lines, or the poem of one clear, brief picture that causes

<sup>1</sup> Lists of the rejected poems and of the poems receiving the highest scores appeared in *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, October, 1926.

an adult to catch his breath in sheer enjoyment is not the choice of the child. He appears to want in a poem a series of pictures, or of events, told with detail sufficient for him to see clearly the author's intent—not a suggestion to stir a poignant memory that is the basis for much of the adult's enjoyment in poetry.

To the psychologist, other reasons beside immaturity suggest themselves in explanation of children's dislike of some of these poems. It is possible they carry connotations exceedingly distasteful to children,—connotations entirely unintended by the writers, that are even humorous in their implications.

In contrast to those poems consistently rejected throughout the experiment, there are a few overwhelming favorites. It is highly diverting to speculate upon the elements in these poems that have so highly recommended them to children. But at best we must recognize that it is only speculation, that the element of greatest consequence to the adult may seem trivial to a child, and the thing about which the child is most concerned may be entirely overlooked by an adult. To be able to point to a single outstanding element of interest in each poem would be extremely convenient, but it is to be doubted if such is the case. There appear, on the contrary, to be a variety of elements of interest.

What shall be our attitude toward the sincere, genuine expression of taste and preference on the part of the child? Shall we assume that because it is natural and naïve there is something wrong about it, and that we must immediately set about changing it? What proof have we that experience gives to the grown-up any *better-ness* of judgment? That maturity gives to decisions a *different-ness*, yet—but is it necessarily *better-ness*? Is it not possible that children find in these poems the homely wisdom and the staunchness of ideas that have always characterized folk literature? Is it not possible also that the

education that takes account of such factors and endeavors to perpetuate them is the education assured of the greatest success?

Some of these choices show, also, a delicacy of appreciation and a fineness of taste. "The Woodpecker" by Elizabeth Madox Roberts, for example, is a charming conception, by the author of the remarkable novel recently published, entitled, "The Time of Man." Though this poem had not been previously used in school materials, it found its place as the highest ranking poem for the first grade.

In reading the 535 poems placed by the experiment arranged according to children's choices, it seems possible to detect an evolution of taste in theme, and there appears to be a certain unity of interest in a grade. This must be accepted with reservations, however, as the interests of each grade show a wide variety. Patriotic poems seem to reach their biggest interest in grades lower than was expected and to decrease in interest in highest grades. In Grade I the greatest interests appear to be animals and play; in Grade II many lullabies are liked; in Grade III many fairy poems are found to be of interest but they do not reach the highest ranks; in Grade IV humor and nonsense make a high appeal; in Grade V many poems of heroes are found; in Grade VI interest divides between home and danger, and poems of romance received recognition; in Grade VII humor takes on an edge of satire, and there are fewer hero poems but many bloody encounters and an increasing love of romance; in Grade VIII romance, tragedy, and retribution hold the stage; in Grade IX the poems chosen are more reflective and thoughtful, as if the readers are seeking the causes of things. It cannot be overlooked that a surprisingly large number of the poems high in the regard of children are written in dialect. Children clearly have no fear of the corrupting influence of dialect upon their use of lan-

guage, but unhesitatingly delight in its human quality and homely artistry.

Several poems such as "The Raggedy Man," "Little Orphant Annie," and "The Leak in the Dike" have a high interest in four or five grades and could probably be used with success in any one of them. But out of the 573 poems used in the experiment, only 59, or 10.3 per cent of the entire list rank among the upper 50 poems of three or more grades. It is clear that outside of this limited body of material of universal appeal, children's tastes in different grades are sharply differentiated. Proper grade placement of poetry becomes then of compelling necessity.<sup>2</sup>

While it might seem that, when the judgment of experts and the best present practice were considered, the grade place-

ment of poems might be fairly accurately determined, nevertheless, when the 50,000 pupils involved in this experiment were given an opportunity to come in contact with a wide range of poems scattered over several grades and permitted to indicate the ones that interested them most, we find that present practice is only 39 per cent right. The changes involve, on the whole, about as many poems being raised to higher grades as being reduced to lower ones, and the errors in judgment are as numerous in the opinions of experts in the field of children's reading as in usage indicated by courses of study and text-books.

An answer to the question, "What poetry in the school curriculum?" becomes clearer. Children themselves answer that it needs to be poetry of action, humor, and full of the vivid quality of living. This all people need in poetry if it is to function in human life, that under its influence we may "make with high hearts of abandon our entrance and our exit before the congregation of the stars."

<sup>2</sup> "The Poetry Book," Volumes I to IX, by Miriam Blanton Huber, Herbert B. Bruner, and Charles Madison Curry, recently published by Rand, McNally & Company, have material arranged for use in each grade of the elementary and junior high schools. They embody the results of this experiment and additional material for school use. The tenth volume of the series, entitled "Children's Interests in Poetry" gives in detail the technique and results of experimentation.

## A REPLY TO CRITICS OF THE WINNETKA BOOK LIST

(Continued from Page 9)

nation, correlates rather well with the estimates of literary value given by our expert children's librarians. Half of the books starred by our librarians as of unusual literary merit occur in the top 20% of the books as arranged by "index of popularity". Of the ten books with the highest "index of popularity," nine were considered of unusual literary merit by the majority of the expert librarians rating them.

Our critics seriously question the scientific accuracy of our work, and bring in two nameless "experts" to discredit it. Our general statistical procedure was gone over with a good deal of care by Professor

Stuart A. Courtis of the University of Michigan, recognized internationally as one of the leaders in applying scientific methods to education. Professor Guy T. Buswell of the University of Chicago, whose monographs on scientific measurement of children's reading ability are monumental, sums up a favorable review of the Winnetka Graded Book List as follows: "In the substitution of scientific evidence for personal opinion, the authors have contributed not only a worth while book list but also an example of scientific procedure which is worth careful study by students of education."



## RELATING MUSIC, NATURE STUDY, AND ENGLISH

REBEKAH AVERY

*Forty-Ninth Street School, Los Angeles*

WHEN IN the fall, the Third and Fourth Grades became interested in the study of birds, the idea of relating Nature Study and Music in the Z groups of the Third Grades seemed to be worth a trial. Music was at a low ebb in these classes. Song material had been mutilated in tone and rhythm. In the sight reading work, these retarded groups had been left far behind the normal groups of children.

One day during a discussion of birds, some old familiar bird songs were brought to the attention of the children. Some beautiful poems were read by the teacher. Mr. Kellogg's bird records were also introduced on the Victrola. As the birds were represented in poetry and in song, a mounted specimen of each was shown. These birds had been secured from the Public Library. There was no longer any lack of enthusiasm or interest. Gradually the room became filled with donations from the children. There were magazine pictures and stories, bird pictures from the Public Library, and one over-zealous boy even went so far as to bring two sheets of bird pictures which he had cut from the home dictionary.

During each music lesson, the children were allowed to tell of interesting bird observations made on the trips to and from school, to the Park after school, and on the frequent trips of Saturday and Sunday.

One day a child brought a picture of a whippoorwill. The teacher asked for its call in the tones used by the bird itself. No one could give this. Finally one child brought out the previously disliked music reader and showed a whippoorwill song on the pages. All the books then came out of the desks and the group set to work to

conquer the song. The result was fairly successful and much better in every way than previous attacks on songs in the music book.

Then the teacher threw out a challenge to the class to find other bird songs. As the songs were found in the book and learned, they were recorded on the board. A second record was also made of other songs the children might use.

At Christmas time, notwithstanding the beautiful Christmas carols, never a day passed but some one would say, "Now, let's sing all the bird songs we know!" When April arrived, the interest in bird songs was still continuing. The many trees in close proximity to the school windows brought many bird songs to the hearing of the children. Sometimes the children and the birds sang together to the great delight of the former.

The following are some of the outcomes resulting from this relating of music with the interests of the children in Nature Study:

*Music*—An enthusiasm for Nature Study and Music which has spread throughout the entire school. There is increased ability in singing rote songs, and those from the printed page. The ability to be good listeners has developed, and observation, and discrimination of bird calls has increased.

*Literature*—The learning of many beautiful poems has resulted from the understaking.

*Nature Study*—A real knowledge of birds: size, color, length of legs, bills, calls, habits of flying, locality, nests, and nest building has grown.

*Oral English*—A better command of language and a growing ability to relate experiences in an interesting manner is noticeable.

## EDITORIALS

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### *Supporting Evidence*

WHILE a difference of opinion over the value of the Winnetka Book List was developing among educators in America, a real discovery of the usefulness of the list was being made by a teacher in the Institute of Out School Work in Moscow, Russia. The Russian teacher discovered that the Winnetka Book List, because of the fact that it represented what American boys and girls really thought of the books they read, was a genuine basis of comparison. The real points of this comparison proved to be the actual assessment which boys and girls made of the books read. Adults may have conflicting theories in appraising literature for children, and these may be removed, quite, from children's interests in books. But of the Winnetka list it must yet be said by everyone, whatever opinion he may hold of its value, that it is a direct expression of children's preferences in their reading.

This, to the teacher in Moscow, gave the list a practical value. In Moscow tests were made to reveal what these Russian boys and girls liked, or disliked, in their reading. On comparison, the results showed that Russian children and American boys and girls feel much alike about many of the books which they have in common. The translation of Huckleberry Finn into the Russian finds its way into the interests of the children of Russia much as the original does in America. Treasure Island and Hans Brinker are favorites of the children of both nations. A more striking example of the usefulness and authenticity of the list could scarcely be found.

The makers of the Winnetka List have had no greater ambition than this, that the

list may show how to interpret juvenile readers to their inquisitive elders. The list need not be authoritative. Fortunately, it is not final. It is, however, a remarkably significant attempt, scientifically, to find out from boys and girls what they themselves prefer in books, with a view to serving these interests and developing them in the most intelligent ways possible.

### *Writing to be Read*

WORRYING AND fretting over faults in the mechanics of writing, teachers have found difficulty in arousing the interest of children in composition. With so much concentration upon correction of faults, teachers themselves have seemed to have little interest in the spirit of the children's composition writing. There is great need of prevision, not only of careful planning and organization, but of a more enthusiastic approach to the writing of compositions.

Oral English is the normal approach to writing in the schoolroom. The selection of suitable subjects from which children, with their class-mates as audiences, may interestingly develop topics adapted to their experiences, is of great importance. However, the mere choice of subject is by no means a sure road to success. Above everything else, there must be in the class a sufficient group life to bring every prospective young writer into such vital relation with his audience as to impel him to write or talk with effectiveness.

If group relations are developed properly there will be no lack of interest in proof reading compositions to make them acceptable and worthy of the approval of an audience of classmates.

## REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

WINNIE-THE-POOH. By A. A. Milne. Drawings by E. H. Shepard. New York: E. P. Dutton Co. 1926. 158 pages.

When *We Were Very Young* so completely won the hearts of Americans of all ages last year that it is not strange that many parents and teachers have been eagerly awaiting Mr. A. A. Milne's new book, *Winnie-The-Pooh*, which has just been published by E. P. Dutton and Company. It is not a book of verses as the other was, but rather it is a story centering about Christopher Robin and the best beloved of the toy animals that stay with him in his beautiful nursery in Chelsea. These are Winnie-The-Pooh, his big Teddy bear with one eye, Piglet, the plush wallaby Kanga with baby Roo carried in her pouch, and Eeyore, the donkey. A wise old owl who cannot spell and a rabbit with "many friends and relations" also wander in and out of the tales.

"Sometimes Winnie-The-Pooh likes to sit quietly in front of the fire and listen to a story. This evening—

'What about a story?' said Christopher Robin.

'What about a story?' I said.

'Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-The-Pooh one?'

'I suppose I could.' I said, 'What sort of stories does he like?'

'About himself. Because he's *that* sort of bear.'

'Oh, I see.'

'So could you very sweetly?'

'I'll try.' I said.

So I tried."

That he tried successfully in the case of one small child was proved when I read the book to a little girl. There was a constant rippling accompaniment of merry little giggles. One longs to quote at length the delicious nonsense. Once in a while Pooh murmurs funny little "hums" as he did when he held on to a balloon and was carried up into the air by a bee tree. He hoped to get the honey by fooling the bees and making them think he was a cloud.

"How sweet to be a cloud

Floating in the blue

Every little cloud

Always sings aloud."

One either likes such fun or one does not. In this connection it is interesting to note what Dr. Joseph Collins in his new book, *The Doctor Looks at Love and Life*, has to say of Mr. Milne's knowledge of children as shown in *When*

*We Were Very Young*. "It is the book of a child with the reactions and emotions one expects of a child. The parents who enjoy it more than their children do are those who have not forgotten their youth—they maintain their freshness of mind and youthfulness of heart by dipping into it."

E. P. Shepard has made the illustrations and they are unbelievably funny. He draws the animals as toys, yet they are very human. There is also a complete and most interesting map, labeled by Christopher Robin himself with his peculiar style of spelling.

—Clarissa Murdoch.

TALES FROM ENCHANTED ISLES. By Ethel May Gate. Illustrations by Dorothy P. Lathrop. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1926.

Beautiful fairy-tales and lovely fairy rhymes are illustrated by Dorothy P. Lathrop, and the result is a delightful book. The style of the prose is graceful, and the poems are delicately fanciful. The stories are more gentle in theme than the older versions of folk-tales. The grace and wonder of the tales are caught by the artist and translated into pictures, and the format shows the nice arrangement characteristic of Yale University Press books.

It is hard to tell exactly at what age children would most appreciate these stories. The delicacy and precision which marks the entire book may not be the qualities best understood by readers of fairy-tales. Nevertheless, the volume stands as an example of the qualities of a good book.

—D. B.

CHIMNEY CORNER FAIRY TALES. Collected and retold by Veronica S. Hutchinson, with drawings by Lois Lenski. N. Y. Minton, Balch and Co. 1926.

The compiler has selected a number of the best-liked stories from Norse, Irish, German, and English fairy tales. The versions are within the reach of children of the fairy-tale age. Typographically, the book is satisfactory, with good type, wide margins, and decorations on each page.

Lois Lenski's illustrations in color and decorations in black and white are especially worthy of comment. She has drawn them as a child might, without perspective or chiaroscuro. Through this child-like manner, and through the use of soft, bright color, her pictures attain a quality as fanciful as the fairy tales they illustrate. Children will delight in studying the detail in any one of the illustrations.

—D. B.



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## SHOP TALK

### READING FOR GIRLS

WHAT does the young girl from, say ten to fifteen *really* like to read?" asks Miss Helen Ferris in an article in *The Saturday Review of Literature* (November 6, 1926). Miss Ferris' position as editor of *The American Girl*, the official organ of the Girl Scouts, enables her to answer such a question.

When Miss Ferris asked librarians and book-merchants what books girls liked best, the answer was the same in both cases: mystery stories. After these, adventure and boarding-school and college stories were most popular.

Through a contest on "What I Wish in My Magazine," Miss Ferris was able to get expressions of preference from the girls themselves. The results corroborated the observations of librarians and book-merchants. Mystery stories were in the lead in popularity. One hundred per cent of the ten-year-old girls asked for stories of this kind. Of the twelve year-olds, sixty per cent asked for mystery. This amount increased to ninety per cent among thirteen-year-olds, and then dwindled to forty per cent at the age of sixteen. There is an increasing demand, from ten to sixteen years, for "boy and girl" stories, and a similar increase in interest in the fashion pages.

Miss Ferris states that, although girls enjoy stories which vindicate their own ethical standards, they show a strong dislike for stories with obvious morals. "The revulsion is, I think, directly related to their adolescent conflict of emerging as individuals," says Miss Ferris. "They wish to think for themselves, to have a voice in the direction of their own affairs—yet their mothers and fathers, they feel, insist on 'bossing' them. . . . In their own reading, therefore, they at once react against anything which savors of parental dictates."

Girls enjoy reading boys' books, and, according to Miss Ferris, boys do not altogether scorn girls' literature. It is as inconsistent to label books "for boys" and "for girls" as to designate adult fiction "for men" and "for women." Juvenile literature should not ignore either sex.

### THE WORLD FEDERATION OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

FROM present indications, there will be in the neighborhood of five thousand in attendance at the Toronto meeting of the World Federation of Education Associations, August 7-12, 1927. Adequate accommodations are being provided for all and the welfare of none will be lost sight of. The program will be varied enough and rich enough to warrant this attendance and many issues vital to the educational interests of the family of nations will be considered.

The outstanding achievement of the World Conference on Education held at San Francisco in 1923 was the formation of a permanent organization to be known as the World Federation of Education Associations. This was not to be an evanescent affair. It was to be placed upon a permanent basis with suitable financial foundation, with a definite program or group of objectives and the work prosecuted vigorously to the end that education might render its share of service to the struggling world.

The special objectives of this Federation are:

1. To promote friendship, justice and good-will among the nations of the world.
2. To bring about a world-wide tolerance of the rights and privileges of all nations regardless of race or creed.
3. To develop an appreciation of the value of inherited gifts of nations and races.
4. To secure more satisfying information and more adequate statement of facts for textbooks used in the schools of the different countries.
5. To foster a national comradeship and confidence which will produce a more sympathetic appreciation among all nations.
6. To develop the consciousness of an international morality in the minds and hearts of the rising generation.
7. Finally, throughout the world, in all schools, to emphasize the essential unity of mankind and the evils of war and to develop a psychology of peace, together with a true patriotism based upon love of country rather than upon hatred of other people and countries.